

## **The Great Prophet Daniel**

Our Coptic church celebrates on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the Coptic month Baramhat (1<sup>st</sup> of April) the memorial of the departure of the great prophet Daniel who has a book dedicated to his name in the Old Testament. He was from the tribe of Judah and from the posterity of King David. He was taken Captive along with the Israelites by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon when he captured Jerusalem in the year 3398 of the world (600 B.C.).

### **Nebuchadnezzar made 3 incursions into Judah:**

1. The first under Jehoiakim (606 B.C.) in which Daniel and the three young men were carried away
2. The second (598 B.C) in which Jehoiachim and Ezekiel the Profit were carried away.
3. The third (588 B.C) in which Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and carried away Zedekiah the high priest.

Daniel stayed in Babylon for 70 years until his departure. He began his prophecy in a very young age as he conducted himself in virtuous life in the due pure honest worship of God, and the Holy spirit filled him (Dan 1:8-16) and the archangel Gabriel called him the man greatly beloved.

He is celebrated for success in prayer, when Nouh, Daniel are Job are named as three men who had the greatest interest in heaven of any (Ezekiel 14:14)

### ***Daniel lived in the time of 4 successive kings in the captivity:***

1. Nebuchadnezzar who carried him away in (606 B.C)
2. Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar and he was the last Chaldenian king, and by the end of his life the kingdom of the Chaldeans ended.
3. Darius the king of Persia who ruled after Belshazzar as the Chaldean kingdom was divided between the Medes and Persians.
4. Cyrus (the successor of Darius) who permitted the Israelite to rebuild Jerusalem.

**Daniel the profit was cast into the den of lions twice in the period in which Darius reigned over the kingdom:**

- ▼ The first time was because of the envy of the satraps and the commissioners whom the king Darius appointed to be in charge of his kingdom. And because Daniel possessed an extraordinary spirit, the king planned to appoint him over the whole kingdom. So they decided a plot against Daniel and convinced Darius to establish an injunction and sign a document that anyone who would make a petition or request to any God or man except him for 30 days shall be cast into the lions' den, because they were sure that Daniel will not subdue to this command, and as a result of this and according to the injunction and the signed document, Darius cast him sadly into the den of lions but God kept him safe and in the following day Darius was astonished to find Daniel safe and he took him out of the den and cast instead those who plotted against him twice with their wives and children and before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones(Dan 6:1-28)
- ▼ The second was because there was an idol in Babylon named "Bael" which king Darius worshiped. When Daniel was asked why he did not worship it, Daniel answered: "I do not worship something that has no life in it." The king said to him: "He is alive for he eats and drinks every day." Daniel told him that could not be true. The king was angry and wanted to check the matter for himself. He put the food and the drinks in temple of the idol and closed the door and sealed it. On the next day, he went to the temple, opened the door and did not find the food nor the drinks. But Daniel with the help of some of his companions, covered the floor of the temple with fine ashes, found the feet tracks of those who entered the temple by night and stole the food and drinks.

The king arrested the seventy priests of the idol Bael, together with their wives and children and tortured them until they told him about the secret entrance to the temple. The king then ordered them all to be killed and allowed Daniel to destroy the idol and its altar. The people rebelled against the king and asked him to deliver Daniel to their hands. The king surrendered to their demands and Daniel was cast into the den of lions and was there for 6 days. However God kept Daniel safe and destroyed his enemies. (Dan 14:1-42)

- ▼ Daniel interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar 2 dreams among them the first was revealed to Daniel as the king had forgotten it (Dan2:1-49) (Dan 4:1-37) and the 2 dreams were fulfilled as Daniel had interpreted them.

- ✓ He also explained to Balthazar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar what the angel of the Lord wrote on the wall when Balthazar drank wine in the golden and silver vessels of the temple of the Lord. (Dan 5:1-29) and all the speech of Daniel was fulfilled in the same night and Balthazar was slain and Darius the Mede the king of Persia received the kingdom and ruled after him (Dan 5:30, 31).

Daniel saw in a vision the kingdoms and the kings to come after him to rule the world to the end of time. He also saw the glory of God and the Divinity of Christ the Saviour. He prophesied about His coming and His death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the abolition of the sacrifice and the offerings, and all has been fulfilled. (Dan 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

- ✓ The first 6 chapters of the book of Daniel are historical revealing what happened in his days in the captivity of Israel and also the 2 chapters of his book which are among the deutro -canonical books. The last 6 chapters from 7-12 are prophetic chapters prophesying about what will happen till the end of the days and they coincide perfectly with the Revelation of St. John the apostle and they are both parallel and sometimes the book of Daniel called “the old Testament Apocalypse”
- ✓ The interpretation of his name in Hebrew “*Daniel*” is “God is my judge” and his chaldean name was Belteshazzar and he lived in the captivity as a prince and was a prime-minister although he was subjected to some prosecutions, and he lived long and active life in position of charge in courts and councils of some of the greatest monarchs the world ever had.

In his book, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter and the first 3 verses of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter are written in Hebrew, then to the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter in the chaldean dialect and then to the end in Hebrew again.

### **Sir Isaac Newton and the Prophet Daniel**

The mathematical and scientific discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) are astronomical. Some of the most notable of his achievements include the invention of calculus, the discovery of the laws of motion and the law of gravitation, and the construction of the first reflection telescope. He also was a man known for his Christian faith. He spent a great portion of his time studying the Bible with a special interest in prophecy. Following are some of his quotations.

#### **On the Bible:**

“I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God, written by men who were inspired. I study the Bible daily”.

**On Atheism:**

“Atheism is so senseless. When I look at the solar system, I see the earth at the right distance from the sun to receive the proper amounts of heat and light. This did not happen by chance”.

At the time of his death, he left more than a million words of notes on the Bible. Six years after his death, Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John was published. Not only was Isaac a great scientist but also a dedicated student of the Bible.